

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/UNAPPROVED

To: Parks & Recreation Commission Members

From: Gerardo Sorkin, Director

Re: Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting September 15, 2008

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Mary Lou Stamp at 7:05 p.m.

I. Attendance:

Present: Mary Lou Stamp, Joseph Cappucci, Al Centone, Suzanne Lewis, Frank Montagna, Susan Puzycki, Richard Wilson

Staff: Gerardo Sorkin, Director of Community Services and Recreation, Victor Palma, Superintendent of Public Works & Field Operations, and Carla Pelliccio (Secretary).

II. Acceptance of Minutes:

Joseph Cappucci made a motion to accept the Minutes of September 15, 2008, seconded by Frank Montagna.

III. Correspondence:

There was no correspondence to report.

IV. Director's Report:

Gerardo Sorkin, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Mr. Sorkin introduced Carla Pelliccio as the new Secretary to the Department of Community Services and Recreation. Mr. Sorkin confirmed her role as liaison between the Commissioners and the Department as they relate to these meetings. Mrs. Pelliccio will assume the responsibility of making sure Commissioners' needs are being met, preparation of meeting agendas, recording of minutes and appropriate follow up following the meeting.

*Recreation:*

This year, Recreation had a record number of participants in their summer program. The playground programs were held at Clintonville, Montowese and Ridge Road schools. Each site averaged 100 children on a daily basis. The Day Camp program held at the Recreation Center accommodated 100 children for 5 weeks. The Little Rec'ers program hit the maximum number all five weeks. Swim lessons also well attended.

The "Music Under the Stars" concert series concluded on August 5, 2008. All concerts were well attended. An estimated 7,000 people attended the Big Shot (Billy Joel Tribute) concert. Mr. Montagna

commented that it had been the best attended concert of the many concerts he had been to. Mr. Sorkin had thanked all of the sponsors.

The track lights are on at the Mike Vanacore Field. Lights will be on Monday through Thursday evenings (5-8pm) as weather permits, until Thanksgiving. An attendant monitors that proper foot attire is worn; no pets and all other posted rules are adhered to (announcement notices with respective rules were distributed).

Registration for fall recreation and pool programs is underway. Many programs begin next week (brochures distributed along with basketball registration forms).

Registration for the youth basketball program has begun, which will be directed by Coach Art Leary once again. Recreation will be teaming up with Max Sinoway again this year. They will be working with both the High School varsity coaches Pete Civitello and Tom Cappello. The format of the program has changed. They no longer will have a travel league but will have an in-town league for boys and girls ages 11-15. Boys and girls ages 6-10 will also be able to participate in clinics with controlled games. The goal is to develop a better feeder program, which will benefit the high school program. Registration has begun and the program will begin in November and run throughout the first week in March.

The annual Halloween Party: scheduled to take place on Friday, October 31, 2008 from 4:30-6:00pm. There will be face painting, refreshments, pictures with the Great Pumpkin and entertainment. McDonald's of Washington Avenue is going to be co-sponsoring this event. The commissioners are cordially invited to attend.

Pool update: During regularly scheduled shutdown week for maintenance and repairs, it was discovered that one of the drains were broken. Drain measures were not up to code; the repairs required that the pool be shut down two additional weeks. The project for replacing drain covers and grates has been completed, the pool has reopened and it is now in full compliance regarding anti-entrapment laws.

20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Walter J. Gawrych Community Pool: 10/23 from 7:00-12:00pm; breakfast will be provided; commemorative water bottles will be given out (invitations given to each of the Commissioners).

Project Graduation: Ms. Stamp wanted to take a moment to comment on the success of Project Graduation and provide positive feedback on the new aspects of the evening including the new venue (Quassy Amusement Park) and the activities and amenities provided throughout the night. Mr. Sorkin offered to provide student and chaperone survey results to the Commission for the next meeting.

#### Victor Palma, Superintendent of Public Works & Field Operations

Montowese Park has been shut down for Fall Ball in agreement with Max Sinoway in order to rest the field. The field has been re-seeded and re-fertilized. Field 3 has also been shut down. Fields 1 and 2 have been re-seeded and re-fertilized, in addition to Memorial Field and the bottom half of town green. Due to the shut downs, Brookfield was rescheduled to the Sunday afternoons at Bailey Rd.

Mr. Palma had received several calls requesting additional Fall Ball programs. Coaches have splintered off regular the fall program and wanted to join the Shoreline program. Parents and coaches have also called in regards to use of the fields. He had recommended that the board think about how they will handle these requests when groups call to request to start their own program. Mr. Palma felt that requests of this nature may be better suited to be directed to Commission.

A lot of growth of the programs have led to the overuse of various fields in town. However some relief of field overuse will be felt once the school fields re-open for the season.

A question was posed by Ms. Lewis as to whether a master plan or priority list exists of who must play on which respective fields. Mr. Palma stated that this is something that they have been doing and will continue to do. He stated that people with currently existing programs in place will be accommodated first. However guidelines will need to be developed to outline these details of eligibility of various groups to use the fields. Mr. Montagna asked if Mr. Palma would like guidance from the Commission to help establish these guidelines. Mr. Centone discussed the importance to rest fields to maintain their integrity. Ms. Hannon stated that the Commission needs a recommendation from Mr. Montagna and Mr. Centone as to what fields will need to be rested. It had already been decided to shut down fields 3 and 4 this year, and plans to shut down fields 1 and 2 next year are in order. Mr. Centone went on to state that once those guidelines are established, they should also be followed by any outsiders coming in to play as well as following the Sunday policy (12pm game start).

The 2008 Columbus Day Parade: Sunday, October 12, 2008 at 1pm on Town Green. "Showmobile" will be set up in front of Knights of Columbus.

Vanacore Field: Youth Football program has been using this field. After recent rainstorm, Mr. Palma was charged with walking the field to make the determination if the field was playable, as well as consulted others to make determination of playability. Mr. Palma feels that the Commission should establish guidelines to determine usage of fields. Ms. Stamp has requested that some guidance be provided by Mr. Palma in order to establish these guidelines and then they would be willing to make a motion on these guidelines as a Commission. Mr. Palma feels that there must be a minimum of 4 hours of wait time following a rainstorm before field should be used. The Commission would like to assign Mr. Palma the authority to make the decision on the playability of the fields. Ms. Stamp had requested that Mr. Palma provide the Commission with guidelines for the next meeting. Until these guidelines are put into place, Ms. Stamp felt that something needed to be in place immediately. Ms. Stamp asked for a motion to allow Mr. Palma to make the decision of usability (based upon any suspicion of danger to players or damage to the field), Motion was made by Mr. Montagna, seconded by Al Centone. The Commission felt that not only should Mr. Palma have the authority to determine the wait time, but also should have the discretion of determining the appropriate cut off time to cancel a game, should it be scheduled for later in the day.

If there was no further discussion, Ms. Stamp requested that there be a motion to rest fields 3 and 4 for the 2008 season. Motion made by Joe Cappucci., seconded by Frank Montagna.

The authority was also given to Mr. Palma to cancel games based upon his discretion. Mr. Palma will be meeting with Mr. Dave Mikos this week to discuss the 4-hour game delay idea and will report back at the next meeting.

#### VI. Old Business:

Ms. Stamp thanked all Commissioners for voting via mail (rather than meeting in person).

Jimmy V. Foundation For Cancer Research had their tournament

#### VII. New Business:

A question had been raised by Mr. Cappucci as to whether a policy should be put in place regarding bringing dogs to the summer concert series. He had noticed at several concerts that several people brought large dogs who did not have plastic bags to pick up after their pets. Mr. Palma mentioned that he believes that signs are posted at the entrances of the town green that asks to clean up after pets, and will

look into it. There was a conversation among Commissioners who mentioned they believed an ordinance to keep dogs on leashes was established years ago, but that was as far as this policy went. If they would like to move ahead in creating a policy, Mr. Palma recommended that the Commission draft a proposal to be presented for the Town Attorney's review.

A Free Energy Assistance and Energy Savings Presentation: Has been scheduled for October 4, 2008 from 10am-1pm at North Haven Middle School for all town residents. This event will include presentations from: United Illuminating, Southern CT Gas Company, Community Action Agency of New Haven, Clean Energy Task Force, 2-1-1 Infoline among others. This event is free and open to the public. Sponsored by Dunkin Donuts. Mr. Sorkin requested that Commissioners attend the event and help spread the word.

Ms. Lewis complimented on the upkeep of several of the parks that he had visited the week prior. Was quite impressed by the cleanliness of the parks, including the spotlessness of the Port-o-Pottys.

#### VIII. Public Participation:

Members from Max Sinoway Baseball were in attendance.

Bob Kowoleski, *Vice President*, Mike Peterson, *Treasurer*, Rick Wells, Board Member, Frank DeCusati, *Board Member*

Member of Max Sinoway wanted to bring Commission members up to speed on the latest events with their organization.

Issue with Scooter Program (7, 8, 9 yr. old program): trying to establish fields for this group. They are aware of the lack of availability of fields however they are looking for the Commission's help to assist them find 3 little league fields (2 would suffice). They stressed that it does not have to be full regulation field (even 100 ft. size field would suffice), but something that can be cut to look like a baseball field with benches for kids, and bleachers for the parents. They are specifically looking for use during the months of April - June, perhaps the middle of July. There are 160 kids comprised of 14 teams. They have asked that the Commission assist them in coming up with ideas to fulfill this request.

Addressed other current happenings: Little league has to start their season early in order to finish season on time; this past year, the program ended early (before school started). Currently thinking about changing affiliations (considering getting out of little league, go to Babe Ruth or go back to Independent) in order to start later, allow more time to practice, and finish season later as well, as to not have to cram in the season. The potential downside to making this change would be to having people vying for field use (800 kids in league).

They are simply asking that the Commission put their heads together to come up with a possible solution. Mr. Palma feels that while there is available land in the town, it will take time to establish a field, including being issues with grass growth and setting up irrigation systems. Mr. Palma will look into existing fields and members of Max Sinoway will continue to think of ideas to fulfill their request.

#### IX. Adjournment:

Ms. Stamp asked for a Motion to Adjourn. Motion made by Mr. Montagna, seconded by Al Centone. The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.